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ABSTRACT

Part of an international series of amply illustrated, colorful, small size books designed for children ages 5 to 10, this volume talks about Japanese culture, modern life style, geography, music, arts, sports, and traditions. There is a brief description of how Japanese children learn to read and write. Japanese hot baths, school books, the Japanese flag and money, and the manner in which the Japanese eat are shown through pictures. Japanese holidays, religions, and agriculture are discussed. The Japanese martial arts and other sports like sumo, kendo, and kyudo are defined and illustrated. Definitions of some Japanese words like futon, kimono, obi, origami, ikebana, tatamis, and bonsai are given. Examples of the Japanese alphabet are illustrated and accompanied by English translations. The book closes with a three line example of Japanese poetry (Haiku). (YAO)

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Japan: Land of Samurai and Robots

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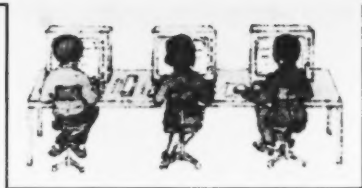


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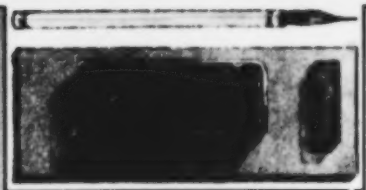


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Japan: Land of Samurai and Robots

Where does the sun rise first..?

The Japanese flag is the symbol of Japan's other name: Land of the Rising Sun.



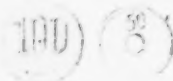
Japan is in Asia, very far from here. It is a chain of 1,042 islands!

It is a very small country compared to its neighbors China and Russia.

When children in Chicago are having lunch, the Japanese are still asleep.
We do not live in the same time zone



Japanese money is the yen.



as they do, because a great distance separates us. From Chicago it takes at least 12 hours by plane to go to Tokyo, the capital. When it is 12 o'clock noon in Chicago, it is 3 a.m. in Japan and it is already the next day.

Japanese stamp and license plate.



品川 59
43-85



ピラミッドのヌエ

東海銀行

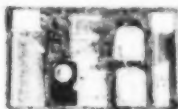
モリス

美田均

TOYO

They have many earthquakes in Japan.

Many of the people keep a survival kit



at home, also a padded hood which protects them from falling objects.



There are many volcanoes.

The highest is Fujiyama. Today, among the 225 Japanese volcanoes, 60 of them can still become active.

Tokyo and its suburbs form one of the biggest cities in Asia.

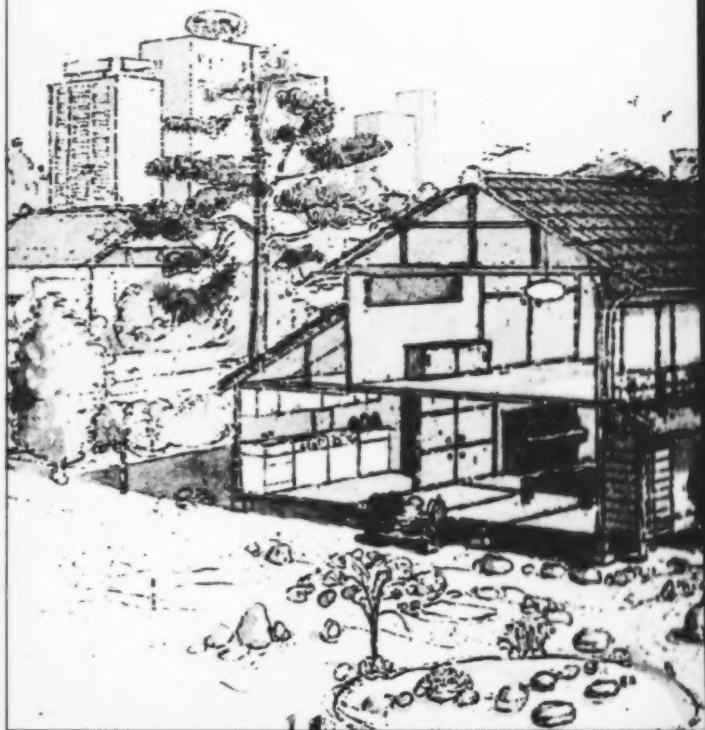
On the roofs of the apartment buildings there are tennis courts or mini golf courses. On the different basement levels there are banks, stores and restaurants.

In the subway, when everyone is packed in, the pusher's job is to close the doors.



A traditional Japanese house.

It is made of wood and built on piles in order to withstand earthquakes. The garden does not resemble an American garden. It imitates a real countryside in miniature: a pool where carp swim replaces the pond, pebbles take the place of large rocks;



a carpet of moss and clumps of fern or bamboo: the forest.

The most precious trees are **bonsai**, which are specially pruned so that they grow old without getting bigger. Some of these miniature trees are over 100 years old and measure only 10 inches in height! They are very valuable.





Why do they take off their shoes when going into the house?

The floor is covered with mats of braided rush called **tatamis**. In order not to dirty

them, they walk on them in socks.

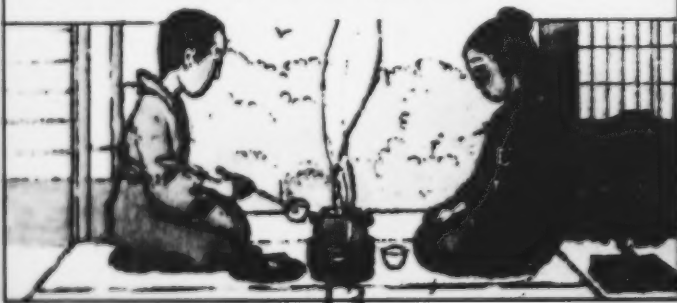
In the house there are no doors but



sliding screens with small squares made out of rice paper. When they are dirty or torn, they are replaced. In the living room, children are not allowed to approach or

play too near the **tokonama**: a little sacred alcove decorated with a pretty painting and a bouquet

In the past when they changed the tatami mats, it was a great event for everyone in the neighborhood!



of flowers, carefully arranged: **ikebana**. Japanese women take courses in order to learn how to arrange flowers. It is a special art!



How do they eat?

The Japanese often like to eat their meals kneeling on cushions around a low table.



Each person chooses what he or she wants and takes it with chopsticks: little cubes of vegetables, meat or fish accompany rice. Tea stays hot in a thermos.

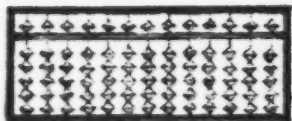
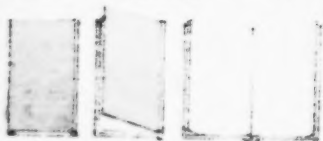




To stay in shape, school children do gymnastics each morning.

Japanese school children.

The books from which they learn their language are different from



yours; their first page is your last page and they read from right to left. For counting they use an abacus: the **soroban**.



They practice while looking at, but not touching the beads, to do addition as fast as with a calculator. Japanese children also practice the art of **origami**: by folding paper without either cutting or pasting it, they make a bird, a

frog, a pig... It is necessary to make very precise movements. Japanese pupils work many hours. When class finishes, they stay at school for a music lesson or a base-



ball game. Then many of them go to another school to take additional courses to improve and get ahead.



Baseball is the sport played by most adults and Japanese children.

The students have much less vacation than you:

one month in the summer, fifteen days in winter and in spring.

The school year starts in April.

More and more Japanese students are learning their lessons from the computer screen.





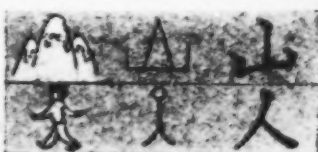
How do they write in Japanese?

Not with the 26 letters of your alphabet, but with little designs. These are characters which represent a word or an idea. There are several hundred thousand of them and nobody knows them all.

The characters are painted with a brush in India ink.

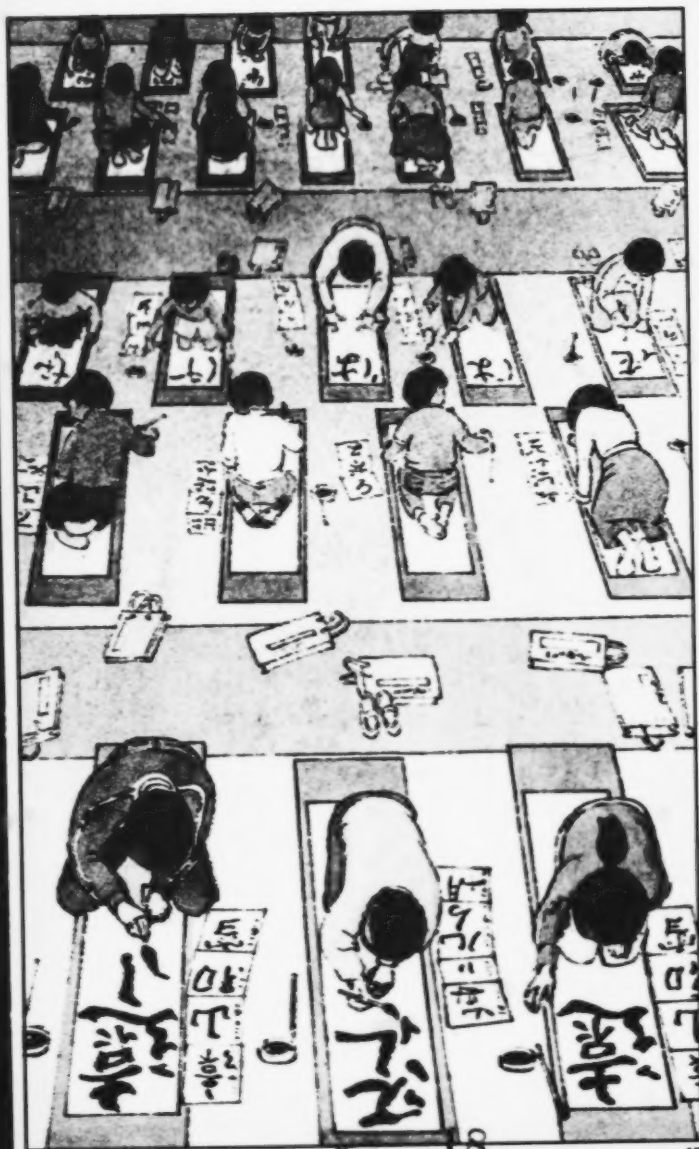


Ki = tree
te = hand



yama = mountain
hito = man

To read well, it is necessary to learn at least 2,000 characters. In the beginning, children read and write with **Kana** which are 46 very simple signs. To learn our alphabet is also useful to them. Each year, an important calligraphy contest gives a prize to the child who writes the most beautiful poem.





The bath: a moment of relaxation.

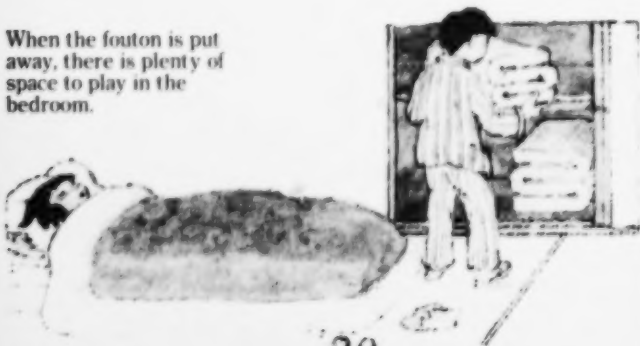
The Japanese like to take very hot baths. They come out of the bath all red, but very relaxed. At home, as well as at the public bath, each one soaps himself and rinses off before entering the bath or the pool so the water stays clean for everyone.



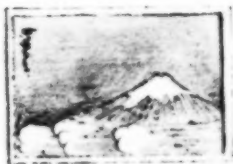
The bed is rolled up and unrolled.

The **futon**, a down mattress with a cover, is stored in a closet during the day. At night, they are spread out on the tatami mats and everyone sleeps there very comfortably!

When the futon is put away, there is plenty of space to play in the bedroom.



替見箇中



How do they dress for holidays?

In a silk or cotton **kimono**, gathered at the waist by a wide belt: the **obi**. Boys tie their obi for the first time at five years of age and girls at three or seven years of age. This event is the occasion for a family celebration.



Different ways to tie an obi.

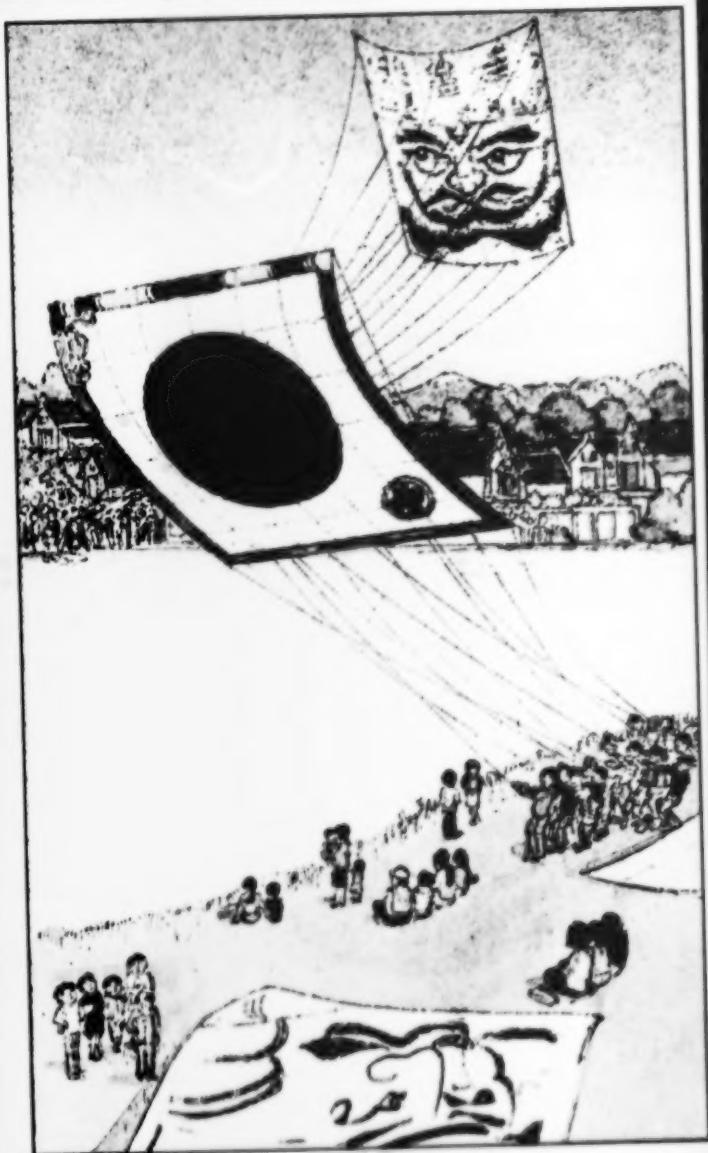
Here is a young boy's kimono. The girls' kimono has long sleeves. A married woman's kimono has short sleeves.

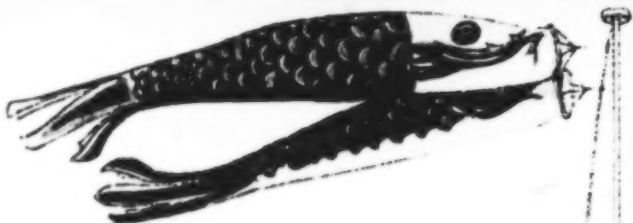
In March: a girls' holiday.

They put out their dolls which are not toys. The dolls represent the Emperor, the Empress, and their court.

With the kimono, they wear sandals with wooden soles and a strap for the big toe: **geta**.







In May: a holiday for boys.

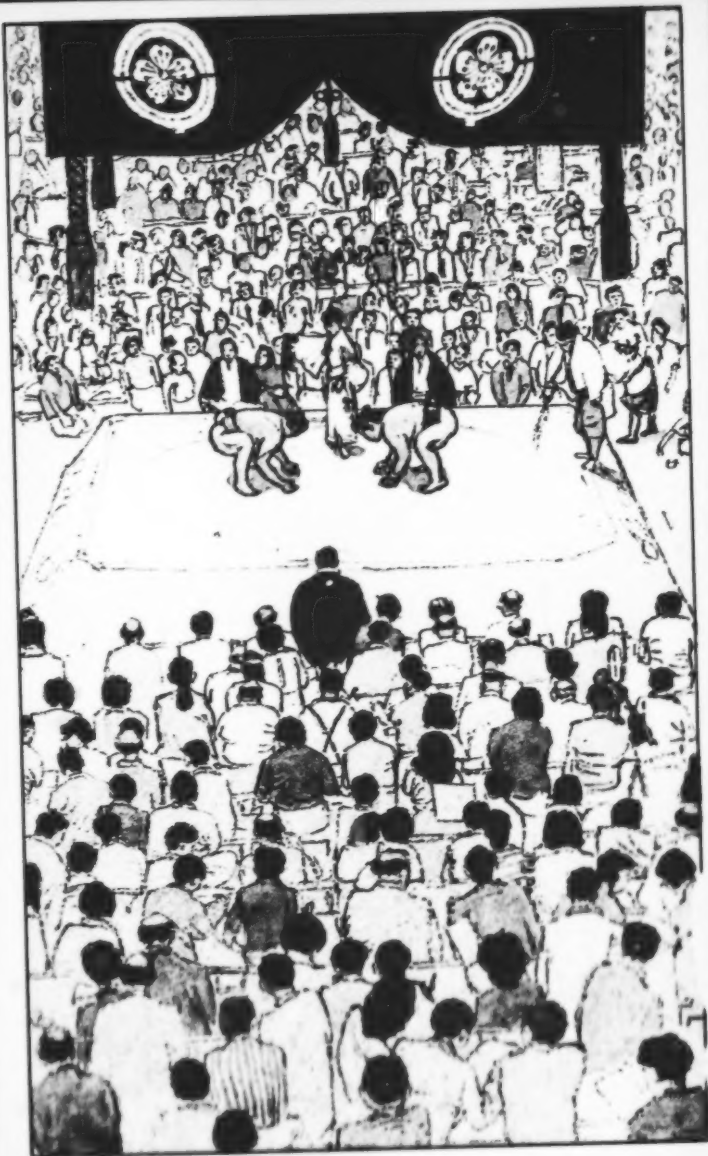
In the gardens and from the balconies, big cloth carp float in the wind and fill with air. In Japan they say that these fish are very courageous because they swim upstream against the current, jumping over rocks. Mothers wish their sons to be as brave as the carp.

Each year the Japanese organize giant kite flying contests.

The strings that hold these kites cut like glass. Each team tries to cut the kite strings of the opposing team.

When they play games and sports, the Japanese like to tie a band around their foreheads as a sign of strength.





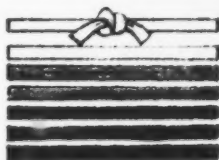
Though baseball is the most popular sport, the Japanese also practice very old sports:



Before each contest the judokas bow to each other.

Judo: a contest without weapons.

It is necessary to throw the opponent off balance and to immobilize him on the ground. Judo is good for control and concentration.



The beginner judokas wear the white belt, the champions wear the black belt.

Sumo: a fight between two giants who each weigh 330 lbs.

Athletes grab each other and try to force the opponent from the circle. The struggle lasts several seconds!



A judo hold.



Samurai, warriors of the Middle Ages, had special ways of fighting. Today we call them **martial arts**.



Kendo: a kind of fencing. The saber



formerly used is replaced by a bamboo stick.



Kyudo: Japanese archery. One must have great concentration to pull the bow and aim at the target.

Karate: fighting with the hands and feet instead of weapons.

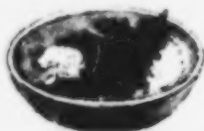


If you traveled in Japan,
you would cross

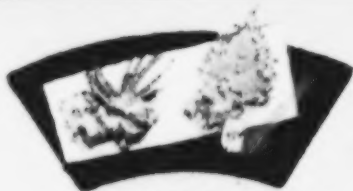


big cities, but also forests of pine, cedar or bamboo, and immense rice paddies.





sashimi



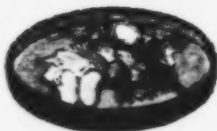
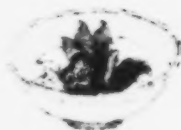
tempura



rice cakes



soy sauce



tofu



sushi

Japan is the country where they eat the most fish.

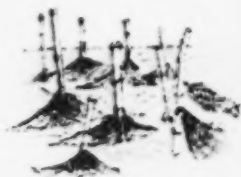
Five times more than in the United States. Along the coasts and on all the seas of the world, the Japanese fish for dolphin, turbot, tuna, bream, shrimp, cuttlefish...

They also cultivate seaweed which they dry. Like

rice it is eaten with many fish dishes. The

Japanese like to eat raw fish, cut into thin slices, with soy sauce.

In restaurants, cooks take courses to learn how to prepare and decorate these dishes which are called **sushi**.



When men leave for faraway fishing, their families throw streamers at them as a sign of farewell.





In the temple gardens, Japanese tie little papers: horoscopes with written vows and wishes.

In Japan there are two religions: Shintoism and Buddhism.

The Shintos honor numerous gods. Here is a Shinto procession. The statue of the god is carried through the streets and all the people in the neighborhood follow the procession to the beat of big drums. Buddhists do not adore Buddha. They revere him as a great teacher who became godlike. The two religions teach children to be wise, good and polite to all humans and even all living things.

Statue of Buddha.







Japan is a country where people like to keep very old habits:

traditions. As in olden times,

women dive to the

bottom of the sea

without air

tanks to look for

oysters containing

pearls. Pearls

make beautiful necklaces. As in

the past, the Japanese wear their

most beautiful kimono when they

invite their friends to the tea

ceremony.

But it is also a very modern country.

There are seven

television channels

and programs

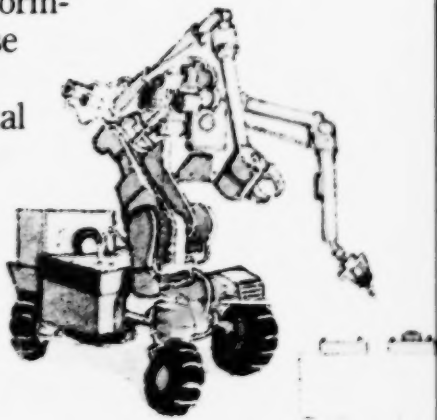
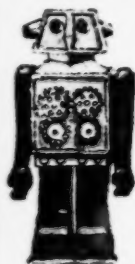


begin at 6 o'clock in the morning.
The heroes of many of your cartoons
were invented in Japan.



The Japanese sell their industrial products
throughout the entire world: cameras, video tape
recorders, calculators, watches...

In the factories, robots replace
workers. A **robot** is a kind of
automated machine that does what
people tell it to do. It is
capable of perform-
ing very precise
jobs, like the
welding of metal



on cars. There are also robots in
the United States, but Japan is the
country which has the most.

Design inspired by
a painting of Okusai.



Japanese poets like to write **haiku**:
short three line poems. Here are
some very old ones.

*Oh to have a brush
which is able to paint the plum blossoms
with their perfume!*

*When it melts,
ice with water
becomes friends again.*

*The thief
took all from me, except
the moon which was at my window.*

(Miyamori)

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Books of Discovery for children five through ten . . .

Young Discovery Library is an international undertaking — the series is now published in nine countries. It is the world's first pocket encyclopedia for children. 120 titles will be published.

Each title in the series is an education on the subject covered: a collaboration among the author, the illustrator, an advisory group of elementary school teachers and an academic specialist on the subject.

The goal is to respond to the endless curiosity of children, to fascinate and educate.





Japan: Land of Samurai and Robots,
illustrated by Michelle Nikly



- Does the ground often move in Japan?
- How are the houses built?
- Why do they take off their shoes before entering their houses?



- Do the Japanese often wear kimonos?
- How do they eat with chopsticks?
- How do they write in Japanese?



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